Updating Labour Laws

1326. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering proposals and have taken new initiatives to update and modify various labour laws; if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of action plan formulated to regulate and improve the condition of labour;

(c) whether Government are aware of dismissal of a number of daily wager Harijans in Government and Semi-Government organisations export promotion councils even after more than 18 months of continuous service; and

(d) the details of action taken/proposed in there regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) and (b) Review and Updation of Labour Laws is a continuous process and amendments/fresh legislation are made depending on the result of the review. A number of labour laws have been enacted from time to time to address various aspects of labour encompassing a vast span of subjects which include Freedom of Assocation and Trade Unions Rights, conditions of work, Minimum wages, Social Security, Labour relations, migrant workers, employment of children, etc. There is always a need to review comprehensively the labour laws so as to ensure consistency of labour laws with the general changes taking place in the economic and social policies and also to provide for greater welfare of the workers.

(c) and (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Elimination of Child Labour

1327. MISS SAROJ KAPARDE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the magnitude of the problem of child labour in the country;

(b) the details of measures taken by Government to eliminate child labour;

(c) whether these measures are effective enough to tackle problem of child labour; and

(d) if so, how?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) to (d) According to the 1991 census data on child labour, the number of working children in the country is of the order of 11.28 million children. Considering the nature and magnitude of the problem a gradual, progressive and sequential approach has been adopted to rehabilitate child labour.

Government has taken a series of steps to address the problem of child labour in the country. Under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 the employment of children is prohibited in 13 occupations and 51 processes listed in the schedule to the Act. The employment condition of children in other occupations and processes is regulated under the Act. State/UT Governments have an enforcement machinery to enforce child labour related provisions of the laws.

Apart from legal measures, Government has taken steps for withdrawal and rehabiliation of child labour working in hazardous occupations through the scheme of National Child Labour Projects. Under the scheme of NCLPs special schools have been set up with provisions for non-formal education, vocational training, nutrition, stipend, health care etc. So far 76 child labour projects have been sanctioned in the child labour endemic States for coverage of 1.5 lakh children. This issue was also deliberated upon by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Court has given several directions, in their judgement dated 10.12.96, including payment of compensation by the employers employing children in hazardous occupations. The government has alreday taken a number of steps to implement these directions.